THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI V. SREENIVASA PRASAD) : (a) and (b) There is no such categorization as "low fat" oils. The retail prices of groundnut oil and mustard oil are monitored regularly. The percentage of rise in retail prices of groundnut oil and mustard oil for the last two years has been 63.2 and 51.3 respectively.

(c) The steps taken/proposed to be taken to ensure availability of edible oils include :–

(i) Import of edible oils has been allowed on OGL,

(ii) The import duty structure of edible oils is reviewed from time to time and availability of edible oils including their prices is regularly monitored,

(iii) An aggregate Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ) of the total imports for crude sunflower or safflower oil and refined rape, colza or mustard oil is permitted at a concessional rate of duty, for actual users,

(iv) The State Government/UT Administrations have been addressed to maintain constant watch over the availability and prices of edible oils and to take timely appropriate measures so as to prevent any possibility of dislocation in the supply of safe edible oils.

Falling stock of foodgrains

3606. SHRI C. RAMACHANDRAIAH : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that food stocks have fallen considerably during the current financial year;

(b) if so, the details of the food stocks during the last two years; and

(c) what steps are proposed to be taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) and (b) The stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool is more than buffer norms. It was 457.68 lakh tonnes as on 1.1.2001, 581.12 lakh tonnes as on 1.1.2002 and 482.05 lakh tonnes as on 1.1.2003.

(c) The Government has sufficient quantity of rice and wheat in Central Pool to meet the entire demand under Targeted Public Distribution System and Other Welfare Schemes.

Per Capita expenditure on foodgrains

†3607. SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether per capita expenditure on food in the country has come down;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether problem of malnutrition has increased as a result thereof;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps Government are taking to tackle the same?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SUBHASH MAHARIA) : (a) and (b) An analysis of the comparative value of consumption of broad groups of food items per person for a period of 30 days based on the data gathered by the NSS in their 43rd round (7/87 to 6/88), 50th round (7/93 to 6/94) and 55th round (7/99 to 6/2000) reveals that while the per capita expenditure on food in the country has increased in absolute terms, in real terms, there may have been a marginal decline, due to an increase in the per capita expenditure on non-food items.

(c) Data collected in the surveys for the period from 1975 till 2000 indicates that over the last three decades there has not been any substantial change in dietary intake of the population. Over this period, there is some reduction in under nutrition in all age groups.

(d) and (e) Do not arise.

Warehousing Corporation of India

3608. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA : Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Warehousing Corporation of India provides consultancy

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.